

FORM E - BURIAL GROUND

Assessor's Number
Number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

39-0-6-0

Hanover

HNS.801

Photograph



Locus Map



Town: Hanson

Place (*neighborhood or village*):
Bryantville

Address or Location: 0 Main Street

Name: Thomas Tombs

Ownership: ☒ *Public* ☐ *Private*

Approximate Number of Stones: Two

Earliest Death Date: 1832

Latest Death Date: 1878

Landscape Architect: Not Applicable

Condition: Poor

Acreage: .11 Acres

Setting: Located on one of the town's main thoroughfares, the cemetery sits just below the street on a small overgrown lot surrounded by single family residences on all sides.

Recorded by: Lara Kritzer, JM Goldson
community preservation +
planning

Organization: Hanson Historical
Commission

Date (*month / year*): July 2018

INVENTORY FORM E CONTINUATION SHEET

HANSON

0 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Describe landscape features, gravestone materials, designs, motifs, and symbols that are either common Note any known carvers.

The Thomas Tombs are located on the south side of Main Street (Route 27) on an overgrown lot at the center of an otherwise residential neighborhood. The burying ground is set slightly below the road and is enclosed by a wrought iron fence made up of three long metal rods strung between granite posts, with an opening at the center of the fencing along the north side. On the south side of the burying ground are the two tombs which are installed into a granite block retaining wall which steps in on either side of the enclosed area before sloping gradually into the landscape to either side. Each of the tombs has an arched stone at the top of the retaining wall and a carved stone above the iron door. The door to the left is engraved "H&M Thomas tomb 1845" while the one on the right is engraved "Levi Thomas tomb ad 1832."

In front of the tombs are two tall brownstone obelisks which are positioned between the two tomb openings. Each obelisk comes to a pyramid style point at the top, has a curving brownstone base, and is seated on a granite block. The sides of the obelisk are engraved with the Thomas family members buried on the site. Both stones are badly worn and the names are only partially visible. The obelisk on the left has writing only on its north side. On its base is carved "M. Thomas B. 1810." The obelisk itself remembers Rebecca, Marcus and Louisa Thomas, but the dates and any additional text are no longer readable. The obelisk on the right has writing on the north and west sides of the stone. On the north side's base is written "Erected by M&E Thomas A.D. 1878." On the obelisk above is a long series of names beginning with Levi Thomas. The rest of the names are as follows: Lydia (illegible), illegible (children?), Sally, Levi, Heman, Marcus, Nathaniel, Thatcher, Elihu, Benjamin. Of the three burials listed on the west side of the obelisk, Elihu Thomas, Age 61, is the only name that is legible. The last entry is for an eight month old, but who it is and when it happened cannot be read.

Although a large rectangular area is enclosed by the wrought iron fencing, the majority of the space appears to be vacant. However, it is possible that the brownstone obelisks record those who were buried in the enclosed area as well as in the tombs themselves. The open space within the enclosure is entirely covered with ferns and dense vegetation which makes a thorough search for additional graves not possible at this time.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain religious affiliations, major period of use, and evaluate historical association of this burial ground with the community.

While it appears that a Levi Thomas is responsible for the construction of the Thomas Tombs, it is unclear which Levi Thomas completed the work. The first Levi Thomas (1776-1860) was born in Kingston and is listed as living in Hanson (then part of Pembroke) by the 1810 U.S. Census. This Levi was a farmer and married Lydia Thomas in Bridgewater in 1800. His son, Levi Thomas Jr., married Phebe C. Tilson in Hanson in 1826 and is the father of the third Levi, Levi Zelida Thomas (1826-1905). All three Levis worked as farmers and were active community members in Hanson. Levi Z. worked as a schoolteacher in addition to farming according to his death certificate.

Continuation sheet 1

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Of the three, it is most probably Levi Jr. whose burial is engraved on the righthand tomb, as both Levi Sr. and Levi. Z. are known to have died much later in time. As such, it is believed that Levi Sr. and his other sons constructed the tombs around 1832.

The other tomb labeled "H&M Thomas" is a reference to Heman Thomas (1809-1876) and Marcus Thomas (1810-1881), two other sons of Levi Sr. and Lydia. Also farmers, the both lived on or close to the Thomas land, with Heman listed throughout the nineteenth century in Hanson and Marcus listed in the 1860 U.S. census as living in South Pembroke near the South Hanson Post Office. Marcus's wife, Rebecca, and daughter Louisa are also both listed on the left obelisk.

According to Town Historian Allan Clemons, burials at this site were discontinued sometime after the creation of the Fern Hill Cemetery in 1847. Many of the existing graves in the family vaults were later relocated to Fern Hill as well, although the exact date of that transfer is unclear. The brownstone obelisks dating from 1878 are believed to have been erected by Marcus and Elihu Thomas, another of Levi sons, to mark the relocation of the graves.

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Continuation sheet 2

INVENTORY FORM E CONTINUATION SHEET

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Photo of site taken at unknown date from FindAGrave.com record for the Thomas Tombs.